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Henry H. Gihlier

Ipswich. September 1872.

A.G.

Verses

BY

A. G.

Alfred Gurney
1845-1898

LOAN STACK

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MAIN



TO MY WIFE.

WITH trembling hands, sweet wife, I bring
This modest nosegay, you must wear
The flowers, every blossom there
Is plucked for you. For you I sing.

Poor verses are the best I make,
And worthless all I sing or say,
And yet perchance my Alice may
Approve them for the singer's sake.

Perchance an undertone she'll hear,
And guess the secret of its birth,
So, though the song be nothing worth,
'Twill still be music to her ear.



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Part First.



A MODERN PILGRIMAGE.

I.

O HAPLESS is his lot who lives
Our modern life with little men ;
The golden age comes not again,
And life nor peace nor pleasure gives.

For hushed are all sweet sounds by those
That jar upon the tortured ear ;
We suffer from a constant fear,
An utter absence of repose.

O happy, when the world was young,
Were men who lived a peaceful life ;
They knew not of our modern strife,
Or how to prostitute the tongue.

They lived among their flocks and herds
With simple wants and homely ways,
And fruitful was their length of days,
And grave their thoughts, and wise their words.

Now words of wisdom seldom flow
From human lips, the fevered brain
Is restless, but a nameless pain
Forbids to fructify and grow.

The world a garden was of old,
Nor weed nor brier grew therein,
Nor death had access there, nor sin,
But God's good gifts were manifold.

The world still wore its baby-smile,
Not yet oblivious of the Hand
That fashioned it, adorned, and planned
A thousand wonders to beguile :

The wonders dimly understood
By Adam when he walked with God,
What time the new-born earth He trod,
Pronouncing all things very good.

Where may we now His foot-prints trace ?
We nothing see save pain and sin,
Distress without us and within,
And God-forsaken seems our race.

For blind our eyes, our souls are blind,
If God there be, we know Him not,
And all uncomforted our lot,
We seek, but scarcely hope to find.

II.

Too well we know our own distress,
And how uncomfoted our lot ;
If God there be, we know Him not,
We share not in His blessedness.

For man his garden-home hath lost,
And, when the day is cool, no more
He walks with God as erst before
This shipwrecked world was tempest-tost.

And yet there have been some, we know,
Not all unblest who trod this earth,
And now and then the angels' mirth
Hath found an echo here below.

Unless the Bible writers lie,
Bright angel-feet have passed, 'twould seem,
'Twixt earth and heaven ; Jacob's dream
Revealed no unreality.

And once a voice of thunder broke
The silence, when to Sinai's crown
Moses went up, and God came down,
And all the mountain echoes woke.

“ Those ancient fables but endure,”

I hear you say in quiet scorn,

“ To grace, embellish, and adorn

An old outlandish literature.

“ For men were children once, and then

They suffered from credulity ;

But modern thought is bold and free ;

Faith is for children, not for men.”

And yet, sin-burdened, wounded, crushed,

I find small comfort in your word ;

And earth, methinks, can ill afford

To have her sweetest music hushed.

Not all, not quite, untrue perchance

Those ancient fables; here and there

God may have heard a good man’s prayer,

And showed a gracious countenance.

And one day, haply, we may find

Not all forsaken is our race ;

Though still averted be His Face,

It is not otherwise than kind.

III.

If God be kind, if God be good,

It would not then enhance our weal,

Unless He made His children feel

How real, how true His Fatherhood.

Old prayers, old psalms we oft have read,
Which seem (and dare we call them blind ?)
The words of those who thought mankind
Still God-beloved and governèd.

We hear of men who knew Him well,
Had dealings with Him manifold,
And how they worshipped Him we're told,
Nor found Him inaccessible.

“ Ho ! every one that thirsteth, try
This stream, for you its water flows,
On you a Father's hand bestows .
The dainties wealth could never buy.”

So spake a prophet once, a sound
Most grateful to a famished world,
And Heaven's banner was unfurled
For helpless men to rally round.

“ The Lord my Shepherd is, and I
Need fear no want ;” so sang the king
Whose youth was spent in shepherding
His father's flocks so heedfully.

You say faith is not to be prized
In men ; yet, whether false or true,
Methinks no evil can accrue
From words so sweetly harmonized—

From words whose music finds a way
To hearts enfeebled by despair—
Methinks strong words of praise and prayer
Can do no harm, whate'er you say.

We gather comfort, courage, strength,
From all that breathes a hope so sure,
A trust so dauntless, such secure
Repose in arms divine. At length

We hear a prophet-voice foretell
(But this 'twere folly to believe),
“Behold, a Virgin shall conceive,
And call her babe Emmanuel.”

IV.

“Behold, a Virgin shall conceive,
And bear a Son, and call His name
Emmanuel, and on the same
The ransomed nations shall believe.”

So runs the strange announcement ; yet,
Although the reason may rebel,
I hear a whispered voice “ ‘Twere well,
Before that message you forget,
“The claims to sift and scrutinize
Of Him they call the Virgin-born :
If so uncomforted, forlorn,
‘Twere worse than folly to despise,

" 'Twere worse than madness to reject,
Whatever offers you redress ;
His voice perchance is raised to bless,
His arm is lifted to protect."

It may be so ; I feel, if this
Be false, 'tis vain to search for truth,
Uncheered is age, unblest is youth,
Death hath no hope, and life no bliss.

I can no other creed embrace,
No other creed of love displays
Such wealth ; oh, how I long to gaze
In rapture on a human face !

A face that is divine as well,
A face I could not doubt or fear,
And such a face confronts me here,
Of such the Gospel-stories tell.

They tell of One whose hand could heal ;
They tell of One whose love-lit eyes
Were full of tender sympathies ;
Of One whose princely heart could feel—

Could bleed for all, howe'er distressed ;
Of One whose all-commanding voice
Could bid despairing men rejoice,
And mock them not when thus addressed.

My darkness, Lord, illuminate,
If light there be, Thou art the light,
Assist my spiritual sight,
O pity my forlorn estate !

V.

To Thee the darkness and the light
Are both alike, I well may wait
Till Thou my darkness dissipate,
And clear my spiritual sight.

Enough to know that Thou hast trod
This earth, and recreated all ;
I hear Thy voice, I heed Thy call,
I know Thee now, my Lord, my God.

I hear about my path, my bed,
The words our Lady heard, "All hail,"
I call to mind the wondrous tale
Of Mary Angel-visited.

I call to mind the Virgin-birth,
The Manger-cradle, and the Rood :
O Virgin-born, from Thee all good
Proceeds in heaven and in earth !

For unto us a Child is born,
To us a Son is given, Who
The world beneath Him shall subdue,
He is the Day-star, His the dawn—

The dawn which to my night succeeds,
When rises in my heart the star
That heralds day, and from afar
The storm-vexed spirit homeward leads—

The home which in Thine arms I find,
There, only there, my Lord, my King,
To sheep long lost and wandering
Thou art a Shepherd good and kind.

Dear Saviour, I have wandered long
Amid distractions and alarms,
I felt not Thine encircling arms,
I did not know that they were strong—
Strong to deliver, strong to raise
The fallen, to emancipate
The captives ; Jesu, all too late
With rapture on Thy Face I gaze !

The Face whose smile hath beautified,
Whose lips have blessed a world undone,
Of ransomed Christendom the sun,
Thy Church's solace and her pride.

VI.

Dear Lover of the souls of men,
Still let me feel Thy guiding hand,
And things I scarcely understand
Become intelligible then.

Thou wast made man to recreate,
Ennable, ransom, beautify,
And sharing Thy Humanity,
By mysteries immaculate—

Thy healing sacramental touch—
Conveyed, imparted, we possess
Capacity for holiness
Within the Church Thou lovest much.

The Church! Thy Life Incarnate still
Extended and prolonged, Thy Spouse,
Ta'en from Thy side what time Thy brows
Were thorn-enclosed on yonder hill.

As Eve from Adam, so the Blood
And Water from Thy side became
The Church's life, and through her frame
Still flows a sacramental flood.

Her foes are many ; there are those
Who worship self and mammon, worse
Than heathen ; others boldly curse
Their Maker, they are open foes.

But subtler ones there are whose voice
Proclaims aloud one half her creed,
The other half, they dare to plead,
Accords not with their wilful choice.

And so her seamless robe is rent,
And marred her beauty, and her crown
Is taken from her. Lord, look down !
On Thee her bleeding brows are bent.

Dear is my Mother Church, whose womb
Hath borne me, at whose tender breast
I gather strength ; oh, may I rest
Beneath her blessing in the tomb !

Which is the gate of Holy Land,
And Thou, to Whom the souls of men
Are precious, wilt be with me then,
And I shall surely understand.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

“ From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a Pure Offering.”

ONE thing above all others, Lord,
Thy Majesty declares,
And preaches Thy Divinity,
And prompts Thy Church’s prayers ;
The Eucharistic Sacrifice
Is eloquent to tell
How great Thy might, how vast Thy love,
Who doest all things well.

It fills the Saints with ecstasy
Who worship Thee above ;
It kindles in the hearts of men,
And feeds the flame of love ;
To sufferers ’tis solace sweet,
To penitents relief,
It heightens every human joy,
It softens every grief.

Not only tutelage in death,
Deliverance from sin,
The bloodless Sacrifice avails
Repose and peace to win
For souls departed; priestly lips,
That bless the bread and wine,
Name them what time they celebrate
The Mysteries divine.

From north and south, from east and west,
Where'er Thy Name is known,
Upon the Altars of Thy Church,
Thy Death is duly shown;
The Sinless Manhood which is Thine
Appeals to God on high—
It does not plead in vain, we live
Since Thou hast deigned to die.

Dear Saviour! by thy life and death,
The pains that Thou didst bear,
And by Thy Church's dauntless faith,
And Thy prevailing prayer,
And by Thy Spirit's energy,
And those dear words of Thine,
Which make Thy body of the bread,
Thy life-blood of the wine,

To us, to all, most loving Lord,
A steadfast faith impart,
And childlike singleness of mind,
And loyalty of heart ;
O may we never doubt those words,
Of children understood,
Or deem that Thou art impotent
To make thy promise good !

For Thou art God, the Truth Itself,
Thy hardest words are true ;
Thine Arm is mighty to perform
What Thou art pledged to do.
To those who doubt, dear Lord, and fail
Thy Presence to discern,
Reveal Thyself, till rebels yield,
And wanderers return.

O manifest Thyself to all,
And make thy Presence known
Upon the Altars of Thy Church,
Upon the Eternal Throne ;
Behold the Lamb of God !—behold
The Sacrifice for sin !
Thus worshippers without the veil
Unite with those within.

They know the power of Thy Cross,
Who at Thine Altars kneel,
To those who know not, Lord, do Thou
This Verity reveal ;
The Eucharist is eloquent
Its virtue to declare,
The mystery of sacrifice,
The potency of prayer.

The Eucharist is eloquent
Thy Godhead to proclaim ;
So may Thy Will be done on earth,
And hallowed be Thy Name,
Until the Church, a Spotless Bride,
Her days of warfare o'er,
The marriage-supper of the Lamb
Partakes for evermore.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

“I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, and so will I go to Thine Altar.”

JESU, lest we quail and falter
As we mount the chancel-stair,
Fearing lest our hearts should palter,
Self-deceivers e'en in prayer,
Teach us ere we seek Thine Altar
How to hail Thy Presence there.

Thine the gracious invitation,
Thine the Hand stretched out to bless,
Only Source of consolation,
Only Fount of righteousness,
Come we in our degredation
To Thy Footstool for redress.

Thine the word creative spoken
By Thy servant in Thy stead,
Thine the Body bruised and broken,
Thine the Blood so freely shed,
Of Redeeming Love the token,
Now for us distributed.

As the woman's plague found healing
 When she laid her hand on Thee,
 O when at Thine Altar kneeling,
 Touch us sacramentally !
 As of old, Thy love revealing,
 Let us there Thy power see.

God Thou art, we would adore Thee,
 Man Thou art, we need not fear ;
 God made man, we bow before Thee,
 World made flesh, we Thee revere;
 By Thy promise we adjure Thee,
 Saviour, may we find Thee here!

O we know still unforsaken
 Is Thy Church, Thy promise sure !
 Still abides the Rock unshaken
 Which she rests upon secure,
 And till all the dead awaken
 Shall the Eucharist endure.

Thus the Church with exultation,
 Till her Lord return again,
 Shows His Death ; His Mediation
 Mingles with her Worship then,
 Pleading still the Great Oblation
 Offered on the Cross for men.

Lamb of God, the world's transgression
Thou alone canst take away,
Hear, O hear our heart's confession,
And Thy pardoning grace convey !
Thine availing Intercession
We but echo when we pray.

Now, dear Lord, Thy grace imploring,
We would mount Thine Altar-stair,
At Thy Feet would fall adoring,
For Thyself our souls prepare ;
Life-imparting, health-restoring,
May we find Thy Presence there.

AFTER COMMUNION.

“ It is finished.”

O NCE more, dear Master, we have traced
Thy Eucharistic Life,
Embracing Thee, by Thee embraced,
 We need not fear the strife,
The foes who would with us contend
 Must now contend with Thee,
Who evermore dost condescend
 Thus with Thine own to be.

With us, in us;—O loving Lord,
 Of Thine endearing ways
How dare we speak? our hearts record
 Their best of love and praise.
O thus to celebrate again
 Thy sacramental birth,
And see Thee mystically slain,
 ’Tis heaven upon earth!

Still as of old, though most condemn,
There are who welcome Thee,
Each Altar is a Bethlehem,
And each a Calvary;
And oh, how pitiful Thy Face,
When at Thy Feet we fall !
And oh, how bountiful Thy Grace,
Who art our All in all !

Lord, make us true to Thee, we pray,
In thought, and word, and deed,
Thy Lips that never can betray,
That never can mislead,
Have taught us what, whoe'er assails,
We never can unlearn—
Beneath the sacramental veils
Thy Presence we discern.

We feel the beatings of Thy Heart,
We count Thy Sorrows o'er,
Whose dying is our life, Who art
Alive for evermore ;
Thou livest still to intercede,
A Victim and a Priest,
Thou spreadest still, our souls to feed,
The Eucharistic Feast.

Thus for the children of Thy Church
 Salvation's cup is full,
Her treasures, when thy try to search,
 They find unsearchable ;
Thee, cradled once on Mary's breast,
 They welcome and adore,
Possessing Thee, by Thee possest,
 They wish for nothing more.

FROM CHRISTMAS TO EASTER.

MIGHTY Mother, Spouse of Jesus,
When thou mak'st the Saving Sign,
All our earth is changed to heaven,
All our water turned to wine ;
Thou for Christ didst bear, dost feed us,
Thou art His, and we are thine.

Led by thee we journey homeward,
Armed by thee we win the fight,
Taught by thee we use the daylight,
Kept by thee we face the night ;
Thine the voice that softly whispers
'Walk by faith and not by sight.'

Poets sing of happy childhood,
Tell of youth's unclouded joy,
Yet methinks more lasting pleasures
Bless the man than did the boy,
Joys more full of satisfaction,
Hopes less easy to destroy.

Bright the rainbow-tints of boyhood
In the holiday of life,
When each face with smiles is dimpled,
Every voice with laughter rife,
Sweet the dream of great achievements
Compassed in the coming strife.

O the world is full of wonder
That the eyes of youth behold !
And to youthful ears its music
Is that talisman of old,
Which, when Orpheus touched the harp-strings,
Savage beasts and birds controlled.

But another spell is needed
When the pulse of youth is strong,
When on boyhood's mind converging
Evil thoughts relentless throng,
And the passions fiercely surging
Sweep their torrent-course along.

Then thy voice my ear detected,
Whispering in accents mild,
'Watch and pray, my son, that holy
Be thy youth and undefiled ;
Lo ! 'tis Christmas Day, and Christmas
Brings to us a little Child.'

Then my soul, herself uplifting,
Through the midnight watches dim
Kneels beside the Holy Manger
With adoring Cherubim,
Till from them and thee, dear Mother,
She has learnt the Christmas hymn.

‘ Now to God on high be glory,
And to men on earth be peace ;’
‘ Tis the Eucharistic anthem,
Music that shall never cease,
To a ransomed world proclaiming
Jesu’s advent, man’s release.

Christendom at all her Altars
Once again the tale doth tell
Of His Birth, Who came to vanquish
Sin and Satan, Death and Hell,
Virgin-born, and Manger-cradled,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Now, through all her fanes resounding,
Once again the trump is blown ;
Once again the Christmas season
Makes the happy tidings known ;
Once again all Christian people
Kneel beside the Manger-throne.

See the shepherds, heaven-greeted,
Worship while the Angels sing ;
See the Magi, star-directed,
Their most costly treasures bring ;
See earth's simple ones and wise ones
Bending o'er their Baby-King.

Happy Mother, Ever-Virgin,
Mary clasps Him to her breast,
All succeeding generations
Speaking of her call her blest,
And Saint Joseph joins with wonder
In the homage of the rest.

Saviour ! by Thy love and pity,
Tried so oft and proved so well,
By the victory that vanquished
Sin and Satan, Death and Hell,
Make us sharers in Thy triumph,
Jesu, our Emmanuel !

Now, dear Lord, Thy Birth-day keeping,
As we bend before the shrine,
Find Thee life and health bestowing
Veiled beneath the bread and wine,
Make us like Thee, child-like, God-like,
Keep, O keep us ever Thine !

Keep me Thine : O may I never
Cease to offer up that prayer !
Great the risks that wait on boyhood,
Manhood also has its share ;
Doubt, the foe that now assailed me,
Came, the herald of despair.

All life's mystery had vanished,
All life's melody was hushed,
For I felt my faith was blighted,
And I knew my hopes were crushed ;
Like a wanderer benighted
Through the wilderness I rushed.

'Twas the desert in life's journey
Where so many lose the way,
See by night no flaming column,
And no pilot-cloud by day,
With the promised land before them,
Learn to doubt and disobey.

Yet with milk and honey flowing,
Still that land its wealth displays ;
God with His rebellious children
Deals in many gracious ways,
Turning curses into blessings,
And defiance into praise.

For that Voice, once more appealing,
Came as it had come before,
'Rise, what mean you thus repining ?
Rise, and trust Him evermore,
Who (behold 'tis Easter morning !)
Rises now a Conqueror.'

Then my soul, herself uplifting,
All her blessedness foretells,
Finds her downward course arrested,
Listening to the Easter-bells ;
Then a larger faith emboldens,
And a deeper love impels.

For the gladsome Easter-sunlight
Supersedes her Lenten gloom,
Burst upon her ears the tidings
'Christ is risen from the tomb,'
Risen, her Emancipator
From the darkness and the doom.

Two days since the Cross was lifted
On that memorable hill,
Lifted the appointed Victim
Her redemption to fulfil ;
Now, though risen and triumphant,
See ! His wounds are open still.

Open still His Heart inviting
Love responsive ; dearest Lord !
Kindle answering devotion
In the souls Thou hast restored ;
Be Thy Majesty exalted,
Be Thy Clemency adored.

As to-day we kneel adoring
Where the Altar-tapers shine,
Hail the covenanted Presence,
Veiled beneath the bread and wine ;
See we in Good Friday's Victim
Christmas morning's Babe Divine.

See we Him Who with the Father
From the first was glorified ;
His the thorn-encompassed forehead,
His the mutilated side,
His the hands and feet nail-tortured,
And the piercing voice that cried,

‘ Father, pardon them, they know not
What they do,’ and ‘ It is done ;’
Death-stained, sin-crushed, interceding,
See we there the Sinless One,
See we, crucified and bleeding,
There the Sole-begotten Son.

Christendom at all her Altars
Tells the wondrous tale to-day
Of the Resurrection-triumph,
And the great stone rolled away,
And the sepulchre deserted,
Where the Lord of glory lay.

Christ is risen ; rise we with Him,
Through Him, to the life divine ;
He can baffle this world's sadness,
Making all its water wine ;
He can read life's riddle, only
Love and patience must combine.

Every gift and every blessing,
All the wealth of sea and land,
All we are, and have, and hope for,
More than we can understand,
All good things in earth and heaven
Reach us from the nail-pierced Hand.

And of noble aspirations
Every age has had its share,
Still the voice is raised in blessing,
Still the head is bowed in prayer,
Still in self-renunciation
Men will suffer and will dare.

Still the world is full of music,
Still survives the saintly line,
Still their teaching is inspired,
And their influence benign,
Where a sick world's wounds are gaping
Pouring in both oil and wine.

All the things I loved in boyhood
Still I love them more and more,
But in most of them a meaning,
That I never found before,
Turns my wonder into homage,
And to love is to adore.

Past the rapids in life's voyage,
Broader, deeper grows the stream,
Bright the rainbow-tints of boyhood,
Youth's intoxicating dream ;
O but words must fail to utter
How divinely fairer seem

Those that mix with manhood's sunshine !
(Mother, thou canst tell my joy !)
Yes, indeed, more lasting pleasures
Bless the man than did the boy,
Joys replete with satisfaction,
Hopes that nothing can destroy.

Mighty Mother, Spouse of Jesus,
When thou mak'st the Saving Sign,
All our earth is changed to heaven,
All our water turned to wine;
Thou for Christ didst bear, dost feed us,
Thou art His, and we are thine.

THE TREE THAT GREW ON CALVARY.

" Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

THE Tree that grew on Calvary,
With arms far-stretching, still
O'ershadows Christendom, alas !
 No city on a hill ;
On Prophets and Apostles built,
 Christ the chief corner-stone,
The Church, divided, sore beset,
 Still is not overthrown.

Within are fears, for Christian men
 Against each other rise ;
Without are fightings, for the world
 Its Saviour still denies ;
It hates that mystery of woe,
 The thorn-encompassed Face,
The triumphs of redeeming love,
 The victories of grace.

The Sacred Presence unwithdrawn
Convinces it of sin,
It knows itself, though fair without,
All rottenness within ;
It dreads the vengeance long delayed,
It dreads His Judgment-throne,
Who from the Cross administers
A kingdom not its own.

I know not if for England's Church
Still darker days impend,
The foes are many, and but few
The citadel defend ;
Yet still our God is pitiful,
The Saints are strong and wise,
And wield a weapon which the world
May hate, but not despise.

For still is heard in English fanes
The voice of daily prayer,
And still the daily Sacrifice
Is duly offered there
At English Altars, where the lights
Symbolically show
His Presence, Who, the world's True Light,
Still tarries with us so.

He tarries, though with rebel-hearts
And sacrilegious hands
Bad men insult Him as of old,
Yet still the promise stands—
“ With you alway, while lasts the world,
It is My will to be,”—
“ This is My Body—Offer this
In memory of Me.”

And some there are whose tears o'erflow
What time their hearts beat high,
Resolved for Christ alone to live,
Prepared for Him to die ;
They know the world's profound distress,
The Church's ills they know,
And higher beat their hearts, what time
Their tears the faster flow.

Lord! may Thy Church, upraised once more,
Subdue the hearts of men,
And may a Pentecost transform
Our Christendom again,
And be Thy Name confessed by all,
Thy Cross uplifted high,
Until a ransomed world repeat
The anthems of the sky !

All things are Thine, to Thee are due
The services of all,
And Thou wilt graciously accept,
And gently disenthral ;
'Tis Thou alone canst make men free,
Who art Thyself the Truth,
Thine be the thoughtfulness of age,
The hopefulness of youth.

Thine be the strength and energy
Of manhood in its prime,
Thine be the toil of hand and head,
Of every age and clime;
The Church claims everything for Thee,
Stamps all things with the Cross ;
O give us ears to hear the call,
And count all else but loss !

Dear Saviour ! make our hearts to burn,
And make our lives to shine,
O make us ever true to Thee,
And true to all that's Thine—
Thy Church, Thy Saints, Thy Sacraments,
Thy Scriptures ; may we own
No other Lord, no other rule,
But Thee and Thine alone !

In Thine own time, in Thine own way,
The prayers shall be fulfilled,
Which importune Thee day by day
Our Sion to rebuild ;
And though our days be dark, and though
That time we may not see,
A priceless blessing waits, we know,
On loyalty to Thee.

RAVENNA.

Passion-tide, 1869.

A MAY-DAY SONG.

“Behold thy Mother.”

THE happy birds *Te Deums* sing,
'Tis Mary's month of May,
Her smile turns Winter into Spring,
And darkness into day;
And there's a fragrance in the air,
The bells their music make,
And oh! the world is bright and fair,
And all for Mary's sake.

Where'er we seek the Holy Child,
At every sacred spot,
We meet thee, Mother undefiled,
Who shun thee seek Him not;
To Nazareth we go with thee,
With thee to Bethlehem,
Still Jesu's throne is Mary's knee,
Her smile His diadem.

The Daughter, Mother, Spouse of God,
None silence her appeal,
Who long to tread where Jesus trod,
What Jesus felt to feel ;
O Virgin-born ! from Thee we learn
To love Thy Mother dear,
Her teach us rightly to discern,
And truly to revere.

To love the Mother, people say,
Is to defraud the Son,
For them, alas ! there dawns no May,
Until their hearts are won ;
Then when their hearts begin to burn,
Ah then, to Jesus true,
And loving whom He loves, they learn
To love Saint Mary too !

How many are the thoughts that throng
On faithful souls to-day !
All year we sing our Lady's song,
'Tis still the song of May—
Magnificat—oh, may we feel
That rapture more and more !
And chiefly, Lord, what time we kneel
Thine Altar-throne before.

'Tis then when at Thy Feet we pray
We share our Lady's mirth,
Her joy we know who hail to-day
Thy Eucharistic Birth,
That trembling joy to Mary sent,
Ah, Christians know it well,
With whom in His dear Sacrament
Their Saviour deigns to dwell !

Yes ! Mary's month has come again,
The merry month of May,
And sufferers forget their pain,
And sorrows flee away,
And joys return, the hearts whose moan
Was desolate erewhile
Are blithe and gay once more, they own
The charm of Mary's smile.

Thy Son our Brother is, and we,
Whatever may betide,
A Mother, Mary, have in thee,
A Home in Jesu's Side ;
Thy children, may we ever dwell
With Him, thy Son, we pray,
If but like thee we love Him well,
The year will all be May.

'All hail,'—an Angel spake the words
We lovingly repeat,
The song-notes of the singing birds
They are not half as sweet ;
This is a music that endures,
It cannot pass away,
For Mary's children it ensures
A never-ending May.

ARGELÈS

Easter-tide, 1870.

Part Second.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
W. G.
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN CHRIST, ON
S. BARNABAS' DAY, 1869.

Requiescat in pace.

I THANK Thee, Lord, for all the hopes
That make the future fair,
I thank Thee for the memories
That interdict despair ;
Sometimes a Father's voice I hear,
A Mother's face I see—
It is a happiness to think
They still remember me.

And now another voice is hushed,
Another pulse is still,
Another face withdrawn, whose smile
Made life less bleak and chill ;
The grave-stones where our hearts have wept
Are mile-stones on the road
By which, a pilgrim band, we climb
The citadel of God.

Dear Brother, when thy prayers ascend
For me before the shrine,
And when (it is a daily prayer)
I plead for thee in mine,
As we approach a common Lord,
The thought is very sweet
That nothing really severs those
Who at the Altar meet.

I kneel before the Sacrament,
And creed and hymn and prayer
Proclaim the Church's dauntless faith
That God Himself is there ;
And Saints and Angels bow the head
Before His Altar-throne,
Who, ever loyal to His word,
Thus tarries with His own.

And thou art His ;—O who can say—
What words can ever tell—
Their peace of mind who hear the voice
That whispers “All is well !”
'Tis then I feel how near thou art,
Thy face I almost see,
When in the Eucharist I touch
The Hand that touches thee.

And He Who now has welcomed thee
This blessing did ordain,
That thou on earth should'st taste with Him
The sacrament of pain ;
A wondrous privilege was thine
So near the Cross to stand,
And gaze upon the thorn-bound Face,
And clasp the nail-pierced Hand.

Across thy path a shadow fell,
A shadow from the Rood,
And hence thy sweet serenity,
Thy gentle fortitude ;
And patience had her perfect work
When bodily distress
Had formed in thee the mind of Christ,
So strong in feebleness.

And when thou stood'st confronting death,
Thy feet upon the brink
Of that dark stream the thought of which
Makes trembling nature shrink,
Thou did'st not know a moment's fear,
No doubts assailed thee then,
So certain of His deathless love
Who lives the King of men.

He passed the threshold of thy room,
He stood beside thy bed,
The Vanquisher of sin and pain,
The Raiser of the dead,
The Healer of humanity,
Of blind, and deaf, and dumb,
When priestly hands dispensed for thee
The sweet Viaticum.

He came not then to raise or heal,
But, as thine eyes grew dim,
To take thee, folded to His Heart,
To fall asleep in Him.
With loving hands we laid to rest
Thy tenement of clay,
Transfigured it shall rise again
Upon the judgment-day.

I thank Thee, Lord, for all the hopes
That make the future fair,
I thank Thee for the memories
That interdict despair,
I thank Thee for a Brother's love
With many blessings rife,
I thank Thee for the Creed that tells
Of never-ending life.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
G. A. G.
WHO FELL ASLEEP IN CHRIST,
AT KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
ON THE VIGIL OF S. MATTHIAS, 1870.

Requiescat in pace.

O WHEN I scan with wistful eyes
The ocean of the setting sun,
And think, ere half his days were done,
My Brother in the churchyard lies—

That distant churchyard where, they say,
The palm trees make delicious shade,
And where, though they so quickly fade,
The fairest flowers bloom alway—

One thought is sweet, one thought is strong
To baffle doubt, and banish grief,
One thought brings with it sure relief,
'Tis like the burden of a song,

That comes again and yet again,
Familiar to our childish ears,
And precious in the after years,
An anodyne for every pain—

The thought that, though the tempest lower,
And though so threatening the sky,
And though the billows be so high,
And seem so ready to devour,

There's One Who walks all undismayed
The waves, I seem to see His form,
To hear above the raging storm
His voice " 'Tis I, be not afraid."

Such were my thoughts the day he died,
And now 'tis sweet to think that he
(Like friends who met in Galilee)
Beheld e'en then the Crucified.

Across the waters comes that voice,
" Fear not, 'tis I;" and we can tell,
Since Jesus doeth all things well,
Why weeping mourners should rejoice.

Wherever Christians lay their dead
They build the Holy Sepulchre,
They bring the spices and the myrrh,
Like her to whom the Angel said

"The Lord is risen ;" then like her
They see the great stone rolled away,
Their load of grief, and know that they
Have found a Strong Deliverer.

Yon sun so bright, when day is done,
Is lost in the Atlantic waves ;
But earth, which has so many graves,
Has still a Sunrise and a Sun—

The Sun that dawned at Bethlehem,
Eclipsed at Calvary, to shine
More brightly still with light divine,
That gilds a thorny diadem.

Most loving Saviour ! may the place
Of peaceful waiting be for him
A place of light, and, though so dim
Our eyes, may we too see Thy Face.

His blameless youth, to conscience true,
We thank Thee, Lord, for this, for all,
His boyhood, one long festival,
So blithe, so gay, so guileless too :

His early manhood strong and brave,
And pure and full of promise ;—oh !
Not unfulfilled that promise, though
He slumbers in an early grave.

Day follows night; sweet Summer brings,
Though dismal Winter tarry long,
Her warmth and fragrance, mirth and song,
When all creation laughs and sings.

And Christian hearts rejoice; our eyes
Discern the Risen Christ, we know
To suffer is to share His woe,
Since He has risen, we shall rise.

A CRISIS.

HOW "merrily the throstle sings,"
And others still are bright and gay,
For me the year has lost its May,
And love and hope are banished things.

But is the dream so wholly o'er?
God grant one day her love may bless
The life whose only happiness
Is praying for her evermore !

OXFORD.

April 25, 1866.

TO ALICE.

When Cyril was born.

THE second Spring, sweet wife, we see
Now clothe the lawns, the copses deck,
Since first you hung upon this neck,
And all the world was changed to me.

And twice, adorning vale and hill,
His garlands gay has Summer wreathed,
Since first you kissed these lips, and breathed
The word that makes life's music still.

And twice has Autumn stored the plain
With smiling corn and golden fruit,
And twice has Winter, cold and mute,
Brought Christmas gladness in his train.

For when, most beautiful in death,
All Nature seems a lifeless form,
And dirge-like wails the wintry storm,
There comes to us the voice that saith

"On earth be peace, goodwill toward men ;"
Then dawns the happy Christmas Star,
And God, we know, no longer far
Removed, He dwells with man again.

O blessings on the months that bring
The primrose and the violet,
When all the groves are song-beset,
And sorrow's a forgotten thing !

With Spring they come, she fosters them,
She opes the buds and fills the nest,
She lays a treasure on thy breast
More precious than a diadem.

Thou camest, Alice, heaven-sent,
Commissioned healer, born to bless,
The sweetener of life's bitterness,
What time thine eyes on me were bent

In love, what time thy hand was placed
In mine with loving confidence,
What time—O happiness intense !
We two in heart and soul embraced.

The happy months have passed away,
And passed the day that made thee mine,
And He, Who made the water wine
At Cana, blessed us both that day.

He blessed us then, He blesses still
With blessings that bewilder quite,
So vast their depth, so great their height,
And so we know He ever will.

I seem to hear about thy bed
The words our Lady heard, "All hail,"
I call to mind the wondrous tale
Of Mary Angel-visited.

So every babe to Christians born
Recalls the Babe of Bethlehem,
And welcome is the pain to them
Who see the Star of Christmas dawn

O'er every bed where Mothers raise
The voice of agonizing prayer,
O'er every new-filled cradle where
A Baby sleeps, a Father prays.

March 20, 1868.

CYRIL'S BIRTHDAY SONG.

Born March 20, Baptized April 15, 1868.

WHEN I was born, when I was born,
I know not whether fear or hope
Presided o'er my horoscope,
'Twas early on a Friday morn
That I was born.

When I was born, when I was born,
Scarce had stern Winter given place
To gentle Spring, whose comely face
Still looked embarrassed and forlorn,
When I was born.

When I was born, when I was born,
Perchance she fancied some distress
Might wait upon her loveliness,
Some cruel blight retard her dawn,
When I was born.

When I was born, when I was born,
Dark turned to light, and dull to bright,
Day stood upon the corpse of night,
And laughed to celebrate the morn
When I was born.

When I was born, when I was born,
Blithe Spring, where'er her feet were set,
With snowdrop, primrose, violet,
Proclaimed herself no more forlorn,
When I was born.

When we are born, when we are born,
Tearful the joy, subdued the mirth ;
But oh, how bright that Second Birth,
When in the Font to serve we're sworn
The Virgin-born !

When we are born, when we are born,
We pass from darkness into light,
When wanes life's day, a second night
Conducts us to another morn,
In Heaven born.

A BROTHER'S VALENTINE.

To A. A. G.

SWEET Sister, with the lips that pray,
And with the smile that scares away
Despondency and doubt,
And eyes so dark and yet so bright,
So radiant with unearthly light,
Theirs is the witchery of night,
When moon and stars are out.

Thy like I never yet have seen,
Thou art not quite a fairy-queen,
Nor yet an elfin-sprite ;
More like a beautiful princess,
Whose every smile is a caress,
Whose voice is musical to bless,
Yet that thou art not quite.

The fairy-queen would laugh at us,
The elf would be so mischievous,
And as for the princess—

As tender-hearted she might be,
Her eyes might smile as lovingly,
Methinks she'd hardly be as free
From all self-consciousness.

I picture thee in every guise,
As Summer suns and Winter skies
Alternate smile and frown;
'Tis always Summer in thy heart,
And thou to others dost impart
Its glow; to me thou ever art
A queen without a crown.

And yet a triple crown is thine,
Which seems all others to outshine
To me comparing them;
The hand that ever sows the seeds
Of loving thoughts and words and deeds
A sceptre holds; my Sister needs
No other diadem.

All Beauty is of Love the cause,
Who doubt it disallow her laws,
And desecrate her shrine.
O had I but a poet's fire!
One hand at least should sweep the lyre,
To sing thy praise I would aspire,
Such honour should be thine

As theirs who used in days of yore
By minstrel or by troubadour
 To have their praises sung ;
Like Dante, passionate, austere,
With whom to love was to revere,
Thus Arthur worshipped Guinevere,
 When chivalry was young.

Such in my thoughts the place you hold,
One of a sisterhood enrolled
 Whose names are very dear ;
All worthy of a poet's kiss
As were the lips of Beatrice,
When to her paradise of bliss
 The Florentine drew near.

And more than that ; I picture thee
One of the white-robed company,
 More dear than all beside,
Whose names I never can forget,
Whose memories are fragrant yet,
Cecilia, Agnes, Margaret,
 Brides of the Crucified.

Such are my thoughts ; nor only that—
I hear thee sing *Magnificat*,
 And can but think the while

How all of beautiful and good
(If rightly loved and understood)
In girlhood and in womanhood
Blends with our Lady's smile.

Sweet Mother, men dishonour thee,
O pardon them and pray for me,
Let not thy smile depart !
If formal worship I withhold,
O deem not that my love is cold !
I am, thou need'st not to be told,
A worshipper at heart.

Sweet Sister, with the praying eyes,
So loyal to the sanctities
That banish doubt and fear,—
Dear eyes, so dark and yet so bright,
So radiant with unearthly light,
Theirs is the witchery of night,
When moon and stars shine clear !

TYNTESFIELD.

February 14, 1870.

Part Third.



VACATION THOUGHTS.

O PLEASANT the meadows enclosing
The Isis—old Oxford in front ;
And pleasant, on cushions reposing,
To dream away life in a punt,
Discussing with infinite relish
The weed that Havanna supplies,
Or plucking the gems that embellish
The works of the witty and wise.

And pleasant the toil and the trouble
Devoted to stalking the stag,
Or trudging through acres of stubble
Intent upon making a bag ;
And pleasant, the ladies' mile riding,
To linger where beauty abounds ;
And pleasant, a hunter bestriding,
To move to the music of hounds.

And pleasant, a streamlet exploring,
To trick the unfortunate trout ;
And pleasant, when rapidly scoring,
The umpire's verdict, " Not out ! "
And pleasant to settle the innings,
And scatter the enemy's stumps ;
And pleasant to pocket the winnings
Achieved by a handful of trumps.

And pleasant in sunshiny hours
When Croquet's asserting its sway,
To battle 'mid perfume of flowers
With Amazons beauteous as they ;
And pleasant snow-mountains ascending,
When London's outrageously hot :
And pleasant, light breezes befriending,
To handle a snug little yacht.

And pleasant with canon and pocket
To get a magnificent break ;
And pleasant caressing the locket
One prizes for somebody's sake ;
And pleasant, while waltzing demurely,
To whisper in somebody's ear
The tender expressions that surely
Somebody's not sorry to hear.

And pleasant, by moonlight invited,
When trembles full many a star,
To sweep 'neath the lattice love-lighted
The low-voiced impassioned guitar,
Accosting in passionate numbers
(O moments of exquisite bliss !)
The lady whose heaven-sent slumbers
Are soothed by such music as this :—

IN the school of Love we find
Much to discipline the mind ;
Learn we, as the years pass from us,
Loving, still to be resigned.
Laughing, weeping,
Sowing, reaping,
Faith be ours, ever keeping
Love's dear pledges binding still.

In the voice of Love we hear
Tones that justify the fear
Lest what once was dearly cherished
Should not always be held dear.
Smiling, sighing,
Living, dying,
Strength be ours, ever trying
Love's high duty to fulfil.

Lady, should it be confessed
One there is who loves thee best,
Who amid surrounding beauties
Finds in thee the loveliest ;
Hoping, fearing,
Still revering
One whose every word's endearing,
Alice, should you take it ill ?

O pleasant and sacred and tender
The homage inspired by love,
For nought can such homage engender
That finds not its sanction above !
Thrice happy who hold it a duty
To fall down and worship in youth—
Thrice happy who, worshipping beauty,
Find with it devotion and truth !

THE WORSHIP OF BEAUTY.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."—Keats.

WHEN youth and health crown Beauty's head,
And Beauty knows not sorrow,
When Beauty goes in smiles to bed
To wake in smiles to-morrow :

When Beauty's pulse is beating high,
And Beauty's cheeks are roses,
When Beauty never heaves a sigh
Except what Love imposes :

When Beauty gaily plays her part—
All music, mirth, and motion—
Then Beauty will subdue the heart,
Constraining its devotion.

But Beauty, when her eyes with tears
Are full to overflowing,
When Beauty with advancing years
Finds Grief a friend worth knowing :

When Beauty's pulse is beating low,
And Beauty's bloom is faded,
When Beauty tries to smile, although
She's trouble-worn and jaded :

When Beauty nobly plays her part—
Devotion, resignation—
Then Beauty must constrain the heart
To yield her adoration.

THREE PAGES OUT OF AN OLD ALBUM.

FIRST PICTURE.

YOU see a lady there whose hand
So lightly touched the sweet guitar,
So daintily, I'd often stand,
Her casement and the evening star

Above me, while those trembling notes
Made soft response to words of mine ;
Ah ! still across my memory floats
That face, and named above the wine,

When healths are drunk and toasts go round,
I pledge her reverently and try,
Aroused by the familiar sound,
To stifle the half-uttered sigh.

SECOND PICTURE.

And here's an early friend of mine,
(Those early friendships live not long),
I told him once across the wine
That something he had done was wrong :

I could not let the matter pass,
I spoke my mind, I saw him wince,
He answered roughly, and alas !
No words have passed between us since.

I often meet him in the street,
His eyes meet mine,—those handsome eyes,
That used to flash their welcome, meet
My own, and will not recognise.

THIRD PICTURE.

There smiles my queen, the loveliest,
Her cheeks aflame with two bright spots
That tell her story, at her breast
Nestle some white forget-me-nots.

I keep the little glove, but oh !
The hand that wore it never more
Shall link with mine, and I must go
Alone as she has gone before.

Alone, save by that memory cheered,
And with this hope to brace my will,
That one on earth so much revered
In heaven may be my darling still.

DAY DREAMS.

H OW oft in dreams I seem to see
The pleasant park, the winding lane,
And live those happy days again
When Ethel used to ride with me.

One tiny hand controlled the rein,
One dainty foot the stirrup pressed,
And proudly arched the chestnut's crest,
And gaily danced the chestnut's mane.

A rosebud nestled at her breast,
Whose hue her dimpled cheek would wear,
When readjusting fallen hair,
Which wanton breezes had caressed.

What tender thoughts arise whene'er
I dream upon my lips I feel
The kiss she blushed to let me steal,
The afternoon we nutted there.

Ah Ethel ! time can never heal
The wound that you inflicted then ;
How many of my fellowmen
As grave a malady conceal !

Some droop awhile, reviving when
They find them other lips to kiss,
But Ethel, let me tell you this—
Some droop, and ne'er revive again.

TO A LADY.

WHENE'ER the time of year comes round
 Of pantomimes and present-makings—
When disagreeable bills abound,
 And most agreeable brews and bakings—
When turkeys disappear as fast
 As Stilton cheese produces maggots,
And howls without the wintry blast,
 And blaze within the Christmas faggots,—

I call to mind the Christmas, when
 I came invited by your brother
To spend a fortnight : we just then
 Were all in all to one another.
I came, and much to my surprise,
 Discovered he had got a sister,
Whose cherry lips and laughing eyes
 Made it quite hopeless to resist her.

It does not seem so long ago,
We decked the house and church with holly,
And hung festoons of mistletoe,
Which was, we thought, extremely jolly ;
And when your eyes with loving glance
Met mine, and when your lips so sweetly
Made music of my name, perchance
I did not always act discreetly.

You brought to each sequestered niche,
My protestations nothing heeding,
That stupid *Athenæum*, which
You always plagued me into reading.
You talked of concerts, pictures, books,
Of Kingsley, Longfellow, and Ruskin,
And pictured Hiawatha's looks
When trying on a new-made buskin.

You dwelt on Verdi's wondrous charms,
Praised "Autumn-leaves," and "Apple-blossoms,"
Admired Blondin's legs and arms,
As nimble as a young opossum's;
You'd learn, you said, while out of town,
A hundred more of Tupper's sonnets,
And finally you settled down
On the prolific theme of bonnets.

You told me there were very few
That gave you thorough satisfaction,
But one there was which had for you
An irresistible attraction :
You'd never, never seen before
So grand, so faultless a conception,
And then the trimming, you were sure,
Exactly suited your complexion.

You praised Præ-Raphaelite costume,
Propounded most Utopian theories,
And left about in every room
The scraps you sent to *Notes and Queries*.
And in your album, new that year,
For all the friends you loved most dearly,
I found six Officers, one Peer,
And half the bench of Bishops nearly.

And Garibaldi figured there,
His leg bound up, "immensely painful,"
And Disraeli with a stare,
To say the least of it, disdainful ;
And Fechter faced by Mr. Ryle,
Colenso, too, by Lord Dundreary,
And Antonelli with a smile
Most disingenuous and leery.

You kept a little book that asked
A lot of very startling questions ;
All they who read therein were tasked
To think what suited their digestions,—
What flower and fruit they loved the best,
And what might be their great ambition :
From their replies, you said, you guessed
“The nature of their disposition.”

You coaxed me into writing there
My favourite name, my favourite season,
What colour I preferred in hair—
I said “nut brown,” *you* knew the reason—
And who my favourite poet was,
And what my favourite occupation :
You asked me that, you said, because
“It gave a sort of indication.”

When once you saw a stealthy hand
Tobacco’s soothing spell invoking,
You said, “I well can understand
The pleasure there must be in smoking.”
I offered you a cigarette,
You took it shyly, somewhat doubting,
And put it to those lips that yet
I see before me sweetly pouting.

We played Ecarté, blessed game
That kept us all day long together !
And Croquet, whensoe'er there came
An interval of sunny weather.
We paced the terrace every night,
What thrilling ecstasies were ours !
And, if I recollect aright,
There was some interchange of flowers.

So quickly passed the weeks away,
Our voices faltered when we parted,
And when they wanted me to stay,
I noticed that your colour started.
You vowed you'd always wear the ring
I sent you with an opal in it,
And cherish (though it would not sing)
My parting present of a linnet.

And I set up a locket, where
I kept for daily adoration
That fascinating lock of hair
You gave with blushing hesitation.
You were but eighteen summers then,
And I was little more, if any,—
I fancy, should we meet again,
Our common topics won't be many

You grace a princely drawing room,
I dwindle in a paltry attic ;
You have a carriage and a brougham,
While I am lonely and rheumatic ;
But still I picture you the same
As when you faltered “ Nought shall sever ! ”
And still one dearly-cherished name
Makes music in my ears for ever.

A RETROSPECT.

A MARRIED man ! No more for me
A bachelor's enjoyments ;
No longer young, no longer free,
I seek out grave employments.
How many escapades were mine
When I was young and hearty !
I was a connoisseur in wine,
A master of écarté.

I had a cultivated taste,
My habits were expensive,
My gloves and scarfs extremely chaste,
My tailor's bill extensive ;
I wore an eyeglass in the eye,
And at the neck a jewel,
I saved my life and credit by
My coolness in a duel.

I had a very finished drawl,
An "educated whisker,"
But no one at a fancy ball
Could possibly be brisker;
My waltzing was supremely good,
Costumes I had the queerest,
The serenades I warbled would
Have melted the severest.

I wrote a powerful burlesque,
I played Mozart and Haydn,
I talked of music's spell, my desk
With valentines was laden;
I always smoked the best of weeds,
Attended routs and races,
I held the pleasantest of creeds,
And worshipped pretty faces.

And many were the boudoirs where
My visits were expected,
And many were the locks of hair
I gallantly collected,
And many albums held my carte,
And many showed my verses,
And many damsels won my heart,
And many duns my curses.

And many were the bouquets flung
By me to stage-enchanters,
And many were the ballads sung
While circled the decanters,
And many were the bets I made—
Reverses and successes—
And many were the parts I played
In Nathan's fancy-dresses.

I always wore the smallest boot,
I drove the fastest tandem,
And comet-like I used to shoot
About the world at random,
Now figuring in Rotten Row,
And now at Covent Garden,
And now to Doncaster I'd go,
And now to Baden-Baden.

I hunted with Sir Roland's hounds,
I fished Sir Roland's waters,
To archery and croquet grounds
I trundled with his daughters ;
And so my merry youth was past,
The which there's no recalling,
But Act the Fifth has come at last,
The curtain's slowly falling.

A SERENADE.

LOVE, how oft thine eyes betoken
What thy lips have never spoken ;
Never should thy heart be broken,
Were it linked with mine.

Love's a feeling so intense
That it's quick to take offence,
Yet should love be confidence,
Dearest, trust in mine.

Love's that pressure of the hand
Lovers only understand ;
Where is love there's fairyland,
Be the queen of mine.

Love's an Archer with a dart
Swift to penetrate the heart,
One alone can heal that smart,
Wilt thou doctor mine ?

Love's a white-apparelled Saint,
Sent to teach us self-restraint,
Nothing selfish ever taint
Such a love as mine !

Love's a Potentate who reigns
Crowned and sceptred, who ordains
Joys for some, for others pains,
Joys be thine and mine !

Love's a Conjurer who flings
Magic over common things:
Love's a Poet, when he sings
Love's a voice like mine.

Love's a Usurer, and yet
Prompt to cancel every debt,
None who know it can forget,
Love, remember mine.

Love's a servitude, to me
Sweeter far than liberty,
If it but be shared by thee,
Happy bondage mine !

Love retains her bloom, her youth
Never leaves her ; love is ruth,
Love is tenderness and truth,
Such be thine and mine !

Love believes, she knows not why,
Love endures, she cannot die,
Death will deathless love defy,
 Love like thine and mine.

Love's all-powerful, all-wise,
Love's a Preacher in disguise,
Love ennobles, purifies,
 Be it so with mine !

Love is steadfast, love can wait,
Deem not love importunate,
Though my life be desolate,
 Love, till thou art mine.

Give me but one smile, one token,
Speak the word which, if unspoken,
Leaves this heart for ever broken,
 Say thou wilt be mine.

Mine to shield throughout the strife
Of a storm-distracted life,
Mine to cherish as a wife,
 Living, dying, mine !

A LETTER FROM ABROAD.

To E. G.

THAT word of farewell which you uttered,
Before you were lost to our sight,
(It seemed as though, curtained and shuttered,
We banished the warmth and the light)
Still rings in my ears, and recalling
Your kindness so tender and true,
I find myself frequently falling
On thoughts that are sacred to you.

Fond memory tenderly lingers
On all that relates to the past,
We picture the musical fingers
That traversed your Broadwood so fast,
You spoke with the voice of Beethoven,
(That voice, oh how sweet and how strong !)
And showed us life's web interwoven
With hues that to rainbows belong.

When Pleasure her goblet is brimming,
(A draught so distressingly short !)
When Hope's pretty bubbles are skimming
The billowy surface of Thought,
When all looks serene and entrancing,
And existence is relished so much,
Remember the age is advancing
When Decrepitude leans on a crutch.

In England they doubtless are doing
The things that to Autumn belong,
Some business, some pleasure pursuing,
Some right things, and how many wrong !
Still moonlight has charms for the lover,
The gambler still fingers the dice,
Still virtue is hard to discover,
And nothing more common than vice.

And sportsmen are riding at hedges,
Or thinning the featherèd tribes,
And statesmen are swallowing pledges,
And freemen are pocketing bribes,
And Roebuck is picking a quarrel,
Or did so the last time he spoke,
And Stanley is pointing a moral,
And Osborne is cracking a joke.

O what the reward for such labour,
The struggle for places and pelf,
The sturdy distrust of one's neighbour,
The sturdy belief in oneself?
I doubt not there's hardly a grace there
Unsneered at, if noticed at all,
And voted as much out of place there
As Quaker costume at a ball.

We traversed the waters that sever
Old England from beautiful France,
And Paris was gayer than ever;
Your Frenchman would probably dance,
And fling a love-song at a casement,
And worship a star or a plume,
Though earth in alarm and amazement
Were hailed by the trumpet of doom.

At Basle, in familiar quarters,
Our windows commanded the Rhine,
We gazed with delight at its waters,
We drank with distaste of its wine ;
Ensconced at the foot of Pilatus,
And tasting the sweets of Lucerne,
We dreamt of the snows that await us
Ere long without any concern.

And now in this desolate valley,
My Lily is going to bloom,
And Daisy's beginning to rally
In spite of the cold and the gloom ;
We're soon to have sledging and skating,
Just think of what you will be at !
At Westminster endless debating,
At Kensington ceaseless chit-chat.

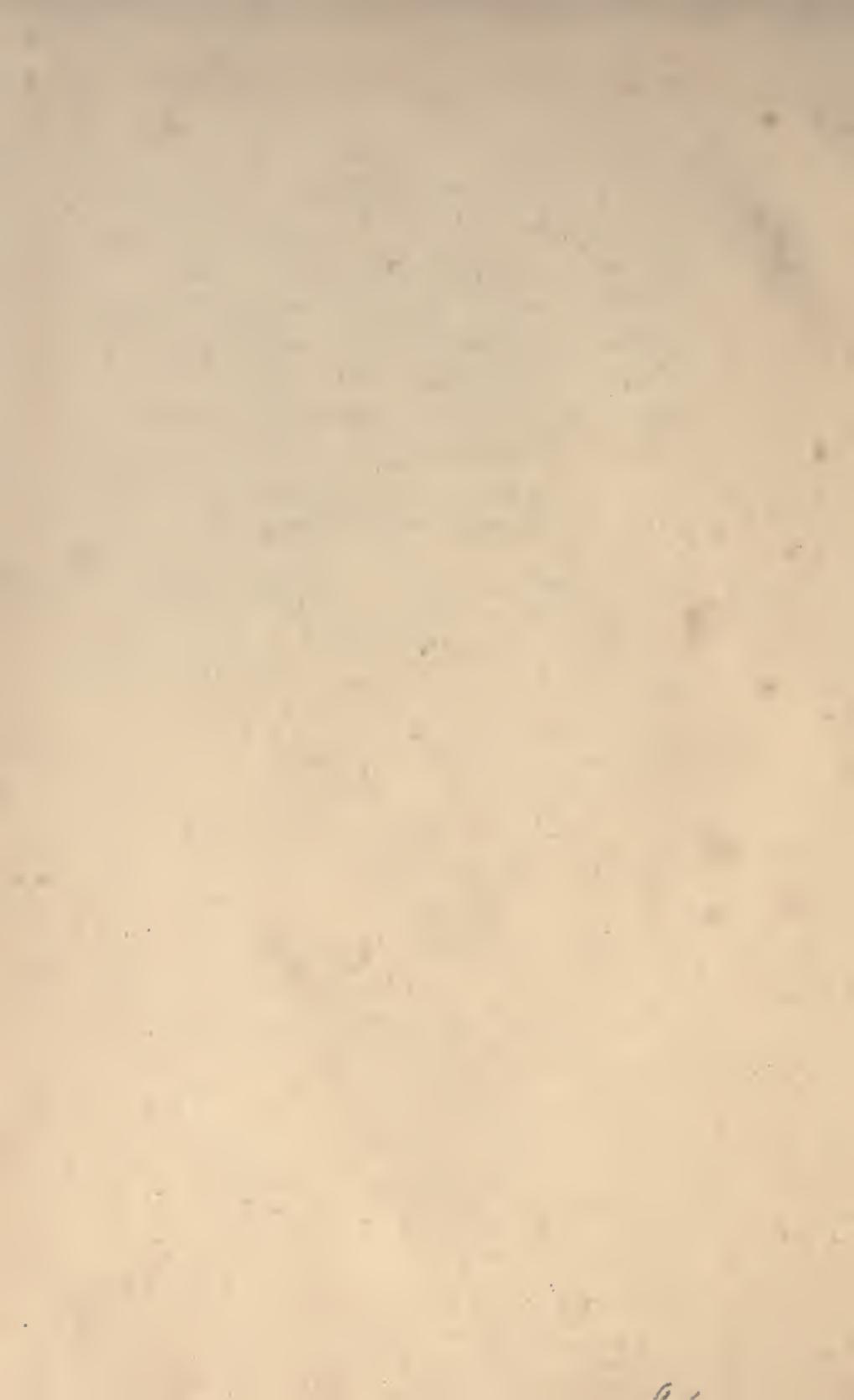
What though we keep plentiful fires,
Frost holds our world in its clutch,
And voiceless those musical wires
That used to respond to your touch,
All hushed those sweet strains of Beethoven,
That used to make melody there,
And Nature has slowly unwoven
The bright summer wreath from her hair.

In London's gay halls and bright bowers
You'll banquet again and again,
Surrounded by shop-nurtured flowers,
And flanked by the foaming champagne,
In jewels that sparkle and quiver ;
Sometimes 'mid the glittering scene,
You'll think of two exiles who shiver
Far off in the wild Engadine.

They think of you often, recalling
Your kindness so tender and true,
And find themselves frequently falling
On thoughts that are sacred to you ;
So pass they this dreary September,
The sky of the Present's o'ercast,
But still 'tis a joy to remember
Dear friends and a bountiful Past.

ST. MORITZ, ENGADINE.

September, 1868.



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